

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 ACDA-07

MC-02 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 EAE-00 /061 W

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P R 111147Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE PRIORITY 6142

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13370

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, TH

SUBJ: STATUS REPORT ON AMMUNITION IN THAILAND (AIT)

REF: A) STATE 114504 B) BANGKOK 11511

1. WITH EMBASSY APPROVAL, MACTHAI ON MAY 4 PRESENTED SUPREME COMMAND WITH LETTERS OF OFFER (LOA) ON ARMY AND AIR FORCE COMPONENTS OF AIT. AS RESULT UP-TO-DATE ANALYSIS OF INVENTORY, TOTAL COST WAS \$59.5 MILLION, INCLUDING 2 PERCENT ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE. IN VIEW OF RETROGRADE SCHEDULING PRESSURES, MACTHAI URGED SUPREME COMMAND URGENTLY IDENTIFY AMMUNITION NOT DESIRED FOR PURCHASE SO THAT SHIPMENT COULD BEGIN.

2. IN MEANTIME, AMBASSADOR HAD RECEIVED LETTER FROM MFA UNDER SECRETARY ANAN PANYARACHUN ASKING FOR DEFERMENT OF FINAL RTG DECISION DATE FROM MAY 4 (KNOWN TO ANAN THROUGH PRELIMINARY THAI-U.S. CONTACTS IN MILITARY CHANNELS) TO MAY 17, AND SUGGESTING EARLY IDENTIFICATION BY U.S.-THAI MILITARY OF UNWANTED LINE ITEMS SO THAT JUL 20 RETROGRADE SCHEDULE COULD BE MET. IN HIS REPLY, AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT DEFERMENT OF FINAL RTG DECISION UNTIL MAY 17

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COULD CAUSE DELAY IN RETROGRADE SCHEDULE, AND MADE IT

CLEAR THAT SINCE THIS SITUATION WOULD RESULT FROM USG RESPONSIVENESS TO RTG'S NEED FOR MORE DECISION TIME, MFA COOPERATION WOULD BE EXPECTED IN MAKING WHATEVER SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT PROVE NECESSARY.

3. SUPREME COMMAND SUBSEQUENTLY IDENTIFIED 5,000 TONS UNWANTED AMMO, MOSTLY 105MM HOWITZER AMMO, BUT ALSO INCLUDING OTHER LINE ITEMS, PRIMARILY 75MM PACK HOWITZER AMMO. VALUE OF UNWANTED 5,000 TONS IS \$10.5 MILLION (INCLUDING 2 PCT ADMIN CHARGE). THIS AMMO IS BEING MOVED TO PORT.

4. ROUGHLY 15,000 TONS AIT REMAINING (VALUE ABOUT \$49 MILLION) ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION AT UPPER LEVELS OF SUPREME COMMAND. OUR CURRENT EXPECTATION IS THAT ADDITIONAL CUTS WILL BE MADE IN QUANTITIES WITHIN LINE ITEMS, BUT THAT FEW OR NO LINE ITEMS WILL BE ENTIRELY DELETED.

5. DCM WAS INVITED TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MORNING MAY 11 TO SEE ANAN, BUT SINCE ANAN WAS CALLED AWAY AT THE LAST MINUTE, DCM WAS RECEIVED INSTEAD BY KOSON SINTHAWANON, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS. SUBJ WAS AIT. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM KOSON, DCM GAVE STATUS REPORT ALONG LINES PARAGRAPHS 3 AND 4, ABOVE. KOSON ASKED IF U.S. COULD SELL AT LOWER PRICE, AND DCM REPLIED THAT WHILE EMBASSY WAS EXAMINING PRICE QUESTION, THERE WAS NO INDICATION LOA PRICES COULD BE REDUCED. KOSON ALSO ASKED HOW MANY AMERICANS WERE REQUIRED TO OVERSEE STOCKS AT KORAT AND WAS TOLD THIS COULD BE DONE WITH LESS THAN 20. (FYI: NUMBER CURRENTLY AT KORAT IN CONNECTION AIT IS 15.)

6. LATER SAME DAY, AMBASSADOR AND DCM LUNCHEDED WITH NITHIPHAT CHALICHAN, SECRETARY GENERAL IN OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER. NITHIPHAT CONFIDED THAT PRIME MINISTER SENI HAD BEEN MADE AWARE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAI DECISION-MAKING ON AIT AND JUL 20 RETROGRADE DEADLINE, AND HAD DECIDED THAT JUL 20 RETROGRADE DEADLINE SHOULD BE WAIVED FOR AIT TO ENABLE THAI TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO THE

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PROBLEM, WHICH RAISED SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. HE ASKED WHETHER WE NEEDED A LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OR A NOTE FROM MFA TO THAT EFFECT. AMBASSADOR SAID EITHER WOULD ENABLE US TO RAISE THE MATTER OFFICIALLY WITH WASHINGTON, BUT NOTED THAT OTHER CORRESPONDENCE ON THIS AND RELATED MATTERS HAD BEEN THROUGH MFA.

7 COMMENT: WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT PRICES QUOTED

TO RTG ARE UNNECESSARILY HIGH AND HOPE THAT WE CAN BE
PROMPTLY INFORMED OF REDUCTION AS DISCUSSED REF B
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMMUNITION, INVENTORIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ullricre
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGKO13370
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760181-0465
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760570/aaaachmm.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 114504, 76 BANGKOK 11511
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <29 SEP 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS REPORT ON AMMUNITION IN THAILAND (AIT)
TAGS: MARR, MASS, MMOL, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006